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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 SSM-03 IO-13 /072 W
----------011710Z 023817 /43
R 011455Z JUN 77
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9031
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0796

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJ: WEST BANK VIEWS-MAYOR OF HEBRON

SUMMARY: MAYOR QAWASIMA SEES PROSPECT FOR VIOLENCE IF LIKUD ADOPTS HARSH WEST BANK POLICY. PRESENT SITUATION IN ARAB WORLD VERY DELICATE AND THERE IS WIDESPREAD HOPE US WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE OVERALL SETTLEMENT. IF US FAILS, FIFTH ARAB-ISRAELI WAR INEVITABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. MAYOR QAWASIMA RECEIVED ME AND POLOFF HULL FOR 90 MINS IN HIS HOME MAY 31. THIS WAS FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO HIM AFTER HIS LENGTHY FUND-RAISING TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA THE GULF STATES, AND JORDAN.
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2. ASKED FOR HIS REACTION TO BEGIN'S VICTORY, QAWASIMA SIAD WEST BANKERS WERE AFRAID. ELECTIONS SHOWED DISTURBING POLARIZATION WITH ISRAELIS VOTING FOR THE EXTREME RIGHT AND ARABS SUPPORTING EXTREME LEFT. QAWASIMA DID NOT THINK BEGIN WOULD LAST LONG AS PM, PERHPAS

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A YEAR. HE BELIEVED BEGIN COULD NOT CONTINUE
TO ADHERE TO THE HARD LINE POSITIONS HE HAD
ADOPTED IN THE PAST AND SURVIVE. THE DANGEROUS
PERIOD, IN HIS VIEW, WAS PRESENT INTERVAL
UNTIL BEGIN MODERATED HIS VIEWS OR WAS REPLACED.

3. ACCORDING TO WAWASIMA, WEST BANK PALESTINIANS
HAD BEEN PUSHED ALMOST TO THE LIMIT BY THE
PREVIOUS RABIN GOVERNMENT. IF LIKUD'S COALITION
UNDER BEGIN TOOK HARDER LINE, QAWASIMA THOUGHT
THAT DEMONSTRATIONS AND PROTESTS MIGHT GIVE WAY TO
VIOLENT RESISTANCE.

4. ONLY BRIGHT SPOT IN CURRENT PICTURE WAS POSITION
OF US AS ENUNCIATED BY PRESIDENT CARTER. PALESTINIANS
IN WEST BANK AND ABROAD CURRENTLY DELICATEDLY
BALANCED WITH MODERATES ENJOYING THE UPPER HAND. IF
PRESENT HOPES DASHED, HE ANTICIPATED A SWING TO
EXTREMISTS WITH POSSIBLE DISRUPTIONS INSIDE ARAB
STATES AS WELL AS THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

5. QAWASIMA WAS CONVINCED ISRAELIS WOULD NEVER
WILLINGLY LEAVE THE WEST BANK. HE ARGUED THAT
THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE FORCED TO WITHDRAW
EITHER BY THE US, ON WHOM THEY ARE ECONOMICALLY
AND MILITARILY DEPENDENT, OR BY THE COMBINED
FORCES OF THE ARAB STATES. SINCE THE LATTER WERE
NOT PREPARED MILITARILY, IT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL
YEARS BEFORE THEY COULD SERIOUSLY THREATEN ISRAEL.
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THEREFORE, IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE ONLY AMERICA
COULD EFFECT PROGRESS. A SETTLEMENT WAS POSSIBLE
IF CARTER CHOSE TO ACT AS EISENHOWER DID IN
'56-57.

6. I REPLIED THAT THINGS WERE CONSIDERABLY
DIFFERENT THAN THEY HAD BEEN IN 1957. AS PRESIDENT
CARTER POINTED OUT, COMPROMISE MUST BE DISPLAYED
BY ALL SIDES, ARABS AS WELL AS ISRAELIS. I
AGREED WITH QAWASIMA' VIEW THAT MODERATES
CURRENTLY IN CONTROL OF NEIGHBORING ARAB STATES
AND APPEARED PREPARED TO ACCEPT SETTLEMENT
ON BASIS RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338.

7. SPEAKING CALMLY BUT FIRMLY, QAWASIMA SAID
WEST BANKERS WERE PALESTINIANS IN SPITE OF
ISRAELI STATMENTS AND ACTIONS AND WOULS REMAIN SO.
WEST BANKERS WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE THEIR OWN STATE ALSO
REGARDLESS OF ISRAELI STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS.

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8. QAWASIMA SIAD LOCAL RELATIONS BETWEEN
ARABS AND ISRAELIS WERE AS BAD AS EVER. NEW
PROVOCATIONS BY ISRAELI SETTLERS FROM NEARBY
KIRYAT ARBA INCLUDED VANDALISM OF A MOSQUE
AND THE SEIZURE OF ADDITIONAL ARAB-OWNED
LAND BY GUSH ETZION SETTLERS RIGHT AFTER THE ELECTIONS.

9. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PLAINLY TIRED, QAWASIMA
PROJECTED IMAGE OF QUIET CONFIDENCE AND
DETERMINATION. HE IS WORRIED ABOUT EFFECT
OF LIKUD VICTORY BUT HOPEFUL US WILL BE ABLE
LAUNCH NEGOTIATIONS.
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